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Evaluation

Management response to the evaluation of the UNDP contribution to South-South cooperation*

1. UNDP appreciates the opportunity provided by this evaluation to review its role in supporting South-South cooperation, and for the guidance it contains to strengthen UNDP efforts to further mainstream South-South Cooperation across the strategic plan focus areas.

2. UNDP is the leading advocate within the United Nations system for South-South approaches to development. It fulfils this role through its support to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and to numerous forums for South-South policy dialogue. It leads the preparations of analytical studies and United Nations system guidelines on South-South cooperation as well as biennial reports by the Administrator and by the Secretary General to inter-governmental bodies on the state of South-South cooperation. Together, these and other activities have contributed to raising the profile of the South-South dimension of development among key policy makers.

3. UNDP promotes increased reliance on the collective resources and experience of the South – not as a replacement of support from the North but as a complement to it – through various processes of economic and social cooperation. By forging stronger links that expand the flows of finance, trade, technology and skills within the South and by taking greater advantage of available assets in the South, South-South cooperation accelerates the development of all programme countries.

4. Specific examples of the results of UNDP support to South-South cooperation at the regional and country levels are mentioned in paragraph 11 below. UNDP will take these and other lessons learned and best practices into consideration as part of its efforts to further enhance its contribution to South-South cooperation.

* The compilation of data required to provide the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present report.

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5. The Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, its distinct status notwithstanding, constitutes an essential element of UNDP, and any strengthening of the UNDP contribution to South-South Cooperation must build upon this reality. UNDP is committed to stepping up its overall contribution to South-South cooperation by making better use of capacities across the organization. UNDP will strengthen the capacity of the Unit to facilitate the provision of intellectual, technical and organizational support for South-South cooperation from all across UNDP – including at the intra-regional level, through regional programming.

6. To do this, UNDP will undertake a review of roles and responsibilities with respect to South-South cooperation at headquarters, regional and country levels, with a view to bolstering its overall corporate engagement on the issue and highlighting the integral role that all units and staff, including the Special Unit, can and should play within the framework of the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011.

7. The relationship within UNDP between the Special Unit and the organization as a whole is complex. In the context of United Nations reform efforts, it is important to take full account of this complexity in reassessing the nature of relationships and the division of responsibilities.

8. All efforts to strengthen the UNDP contribution to South-South cooperation should distinguish between the different roles that UNDP plays in this respect, including:

(a) The leadership role assigned to UNDP in regard to South-South cooperation, designating the Administrator as the convener of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, with responsibility for delivering on South-South cooperation within that broader framework;

(b) As established in General Assembly resolution 34/213, and most recently underscored in resolution 59/250, the management of the resident coordination system, which continues to be firmly anchored in UNDP.

(c) The operational role of UNDP in support of national development plans and strategies.

9. UNDP is committed to establishing a more effective, integrated approach to South-South cooperation, based on a clearer division of responsibilities for South-South cooperation across the organization and on a closer, mutually supportive collaboration with the Special Unit. Key aspects of this approach will include:

(a) A more focused and strategic Fourth Cooperation Framework for South-South Cooperation, situated within the context of the updated UNDP strategic plan. The framework and the plan are the two pillars of a comprehensive, integrated UNDP strategy to support South-South cooperation.

(b) Strengthened strategic partnerships for South-South cooperation within and outside the United Nations system, within the framework of the UNDP strategic plan and the Fourth Cooperation Framework for South-South Cooperation.

(c) More effective internal and external processes of consultation and prioritization of demand for South-South cooperation, based on strict criteria.

(d) Improved follow-up on requests to the Administrator via inter-governmental processes concerning South-South initiatives that require a multilateral response.

(e) The leveraging of UNDP and United Nations knowledge networks for South-South cooperation.

(f) Identification and implementation of pilot initiatives for mainstreaming South-South Cooperation within the context of the updated UNDP strategic plan development results framework, while maximizing opportunities for scaling up.

10. The evaluation report recommends that the Special Unit adhere to the selection criteria presented in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the New Directions Strategy for Technical Cooperation amongst Developing Countries and the United Nations guidelines on South-South cooperation. The current review of operational activities in the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review process in the General Assembly includes South-South cooperation. The outcome of that process should also influence how UNDP takes forward the opportunities for greater United Nations contributions to development effectiveness using the South-South cooperation platform.

11. With respect to specific findings, UNDP acknowledges that while it has consistently given South-South cooperation organizational priority, it is often left to the individual initiative of UNDP managers to drive South-South cooperation at the regional and country levels. In addition, many of the South-South cooperation activities supported by UNDP are not formally recognized as such, often as the unintentional result of their effective mainstreaming into regular UNDP programmes and projects.

12. The evaluation identifies a number of examples of the UNDP commitment and contribution to South-South Cooperation, many of which have not been so categorized, including:

(a) UNDP support for the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD), a regional effort that started in 2004. The support has helped fund 20 studies, create a roster of 3,000 African experts for recruitment of staff and consultants, revamp the NEPAD website and prepare the four-year strategic plan of NEPAD.

(b) The long-term UNDP commitment to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), dating back to its inception in 1967. Currently, the $1.45 million ASEAN-UNDP partnership facility focuses on the policy issues related to regional economic integration, with an emphasis on minimizing the short-term adjustment costs in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

(c) The establishment of the International Poverty Centre in Brasilia, a joint project between UNDP and the Brazilian Government to promote South-South cooperation on applied poverty research and training.

(d) The support provided by the regional programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States to cross-border efforts to overcome the lingering consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, involving local communities and governments.

(e) National and regional human development reports, which regularly utilize South-South exchanges. The well-known series of Arab human development reports have engaged Arab scholars from across the region and have led to intra-regional cooperation initiatives.

13. There are many more examples than those mentioned in the evaluation, including the many workshops, technical support and studies, and high level conferences to facilitate South-South cooperation in Africa that UNDP has undertaken with the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union, and African Development Bank, as well as numerous cooperation activities conducted by UNDP country offices in all regions to promote technical cooperation among developing countries.

14. UNDP agrees that there is a need for a comprehensive inventory of such activities, along with adequate institutional strategies, clear collaborative arrangements and institutional mechanisms, and focused, proactive corporate guidance and support to assist regional bureaux and country offices in operationalizing and documenting the UNDP contribution to South-South cooperation.

15. UNDP acknowledges that its extensive capacity with respect to regional service centres, thematic knowledge networks and communities of practice should be leveraged further to facilitate South-South cooperation more systematically and to codify experiences and best practices for learning purposes. Interregional South-South cooperation will be enhanced through improved coordination and communication among global thematic centres and programmes, regional centres, regional communities of practice, country offices, and United Nations system partners. Synergy with the UNDP global and regional cooperation frameworks is an essential aspect of achieving a strengthened contribution to South-South cooperation through a focus on results and clear assignment of responsibilities.

16. UNDP agrees that more should be done to build on experience and leverage the strengths of the United Nations system to promote South-South cooperation. In so doing it should utilize the knowledge systems highlighted in paragraph 13 of the present report, within the context of the strategic plan target of establishing networks – including South-South networks – for United Nations system-wide support to boost local entrepreneurship, private-sector development and civil society in at least 50 countries by 2009, in collaboration with United Nations partners.

17. UNDP acknowledges that its role in middle-income countries needs to be reviewed and clarified, and the organization is now engaged in that exercise. Without question, the role of UNDP should include facilitating and promoting South-South cooperation, based on the demand in each country and each regional context.

18. The annex on the following pages outlines the main conclusions and recommendations of the report and the UNDP response, including steps that the organization is taking to address the issues raised by the evaluation.

Annex
Key recommendations and management response

Recommendation 1. The Fourth Cooperation Framework for South-South Cooperation managed by the Special Unit should be shaped around three activity streams – knowledge sharing, policy development and advocacy, and catalysing innovation. Initiatives in each of the streams should be time-bound and results-oriented.				
Management response. The evaluation recognizes that the three platforms of the Third Cooperation Framework for South-South Cooperation – which are analogous to the proposed three activity streams – provide useful conceptual tools for identifying areas for South-South interventions. The Fourth Cooperation Framework will provide UNDP with the opportunity to build on the three platforms in order to fully realize the progress made over the previous three years.				
Key actions	**Time frame**	**Responsible units**	**Tracking***	
			Comments	**Status**
1.1 **Prepare a results-oriented Fourth Cooperation Framework** with outcomes, outputs and targets concerning policy development and advocacy; South-South solutions exchange; piloting best practices and innovations; and strengthening the coherence of United Nations support for South-South cooperation.	2008	The Special Unit for South-South Cooperation (SU/SSC), supported by the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), the Partnerships Bureau and the Operations Support Group (OSG)		
1.2 **Strengthen the Web of Information for Development** to serve as a more effective knowledge repository of South-South cooperation experience, and support other initiatives – especially within UNDP and other United Nations organizations – with measurable outcomes and output indicators for South-South knowledge and experience sharing.	2008	SU/SSC;BDP, supported by BCPR, regional bureaux and country offices		
1.3 In collaboration with United Nations organizations and agencies, **improve policy development and advocacy for South-South cooperation** through more effective servicing by the Administrator of the High-level Committee, intergovernmental policy dialogue and advisory services to governments, and support to United Nations-wide efforts to develop strategies for more effective South-South cooperation.	2008-2011	SU/SSC and the Executive Office, supported by BDP, BCPR and the Partnerships Bureau		
1.4 In collaboration with other UNDP units and associated organizations, identify and catalyse the United Nations to **pilot innovative mechanisms and development solutions that are time-bound, results-oriented and that have potential for scaling up.**	2008-2011	SU/SSC, supported by BDP, BCPR, regional bureaux and country offices		

Recommendation 2. In programming initiatives, the Special Unit should adopt strict criteria, and leverage the capacities of UNDP and other relevant United Nations organizations to enhance the contribution of South-South cooperation to development effectiveness				
Management response. The Special Unit will develop stricter criteria for use by the UNDP Administrator in identifying priority South-South activities to be supported by UNDP and partners. Those criteria will be reflected in the Fourth Cooperation Framework. Also, in line with the UNDP strategic plan, the Special Unit will collaborate with other relevant UNDP units to further develop networks and communities of practice and establish "networks, including South-South networks, for United Nations system-wide support to boost local entrepreneurship, private-sector development and civil society in at least 50 countries by 2009, in collaboration with United Nations partners".				
Key actions	**Time frame**	**Responsible units**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
2.1. **Develop corporate guidance for support to South-South Cooperation** that communicates a shared understanding of the concept and includes revised guidance to United Nations country teams on mainstreaming South-South Cooperation into UNDAFs and incorporating revised criteria to be used by UNDP for prioritizing initiatives.	2008-2009	SU/SSC and OSG, supported by BDP and the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO)		
2.2. **Strengthen existing and establish new South-South networks**, including for United Nations system-wide support, in collaboration with United Nations partners.	2009	SU/SSC and BDP, supported by the Partnerships Bureau, BCPR, UNDGO, and the regional bureaux		

Recommendation 3. UNDP should develop a corporate strategy on South-South cooperation that addresses emerging issues; draws on its own experience; integrates all its programme frameworks, and is underpinned by resources, incentives and accountability.				
Management response. This recommendation responds to the conclusion that "UNDP has not developed at the corporate level a robust and proactive approach to South-South cooperation. UNDP acknowledges that an overall strategy is needed. UNDP is committed to doing this within the framework of its updated strategic plan, including the revised development and institutional results frameworks to be submitted to the Executive Board at its annual session 2008 and through a fourth cooperation framework that is comprehensive yet strategic, and flexible enough to respond to emerging demands, and that identifies specific deliverables as well as a clear division of labour within UNDP, with incentives and clear lines of accountability. While UNDP is committed to mainstreaming South-South cooperation across the four UNDP focus areas, it believes that there is benefit in taking a strategic approach by prioritizing its corporate South-South cooperation efforts around poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. UNDP will also work to ensure that any pilot activities in this context contain adequate scaling-up and/or exit strategies.				
Key actions	**Time frame**	**Responsible units**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
3.1 **Prepare and obtain approval of the Fourth Cooperation Framework,** to include: (a) deliverables linked to outcomes within the strategic plan development results framework, and assignation of resources for these deliverables; (b) clarification of roles and responsibilities for promoting South-South cooperation within UNDP; (c) analysis of emerging issues; and (d) integration of all relevant programme frameworks, resources, incentives and lines of accountability.	First quarter 2008	SU/SSC supported by BDP,BCPR, BRSP and OSG		
3.2 Leveraging its global knowledge network, **undertake a global inventory of South-South cooperation results** achieved by UNDP, to codify experiences and best practices and to serve as a baseline for future assessment.	2008	SU/SSC and BDP, supported by BCPR, regional bureaux and country offices		
3.3 **Undertake a consultation process on specific opportunities for scaling up the impact of South-South cooperation for development,** in the context of the UNDP strategic plan and the Fourth Cooperation Framework, to identify where the capacities of the UNDP global knowledge network and the capacities of participating countries can be leveraged optimally.	2008	SU/SSC and BDP, supported by BCPR, regional bureaux and country offices		
3.4 **Monitor, report on and evaluate** the results of the Fourth Cooperation Framework and relevant aspects of the UNDP strategic plan, applying corporate UNDP monitoring and evaluation systems and tools.	2009-2011	SU/SSC and OSG, supported by BDP, BCPR, regional bureaux and country offices		

Recommendation 4. Define clear collaboration arrangements between the Special Unit and UNDP				
Management response. UNDP agrees with this recommendation and will take two specific steps towards defining these arrangements: (a) Clarification of roles and responsibilities across UNDP units for promotion of and support to South-South Cooperation and elaboration of those arrangements within the Fourth Cooperation Framework; (b) Inclusion of South-South cooperation in the corporate UNDP effort to define and approve "memoranda of understanding and/or action plans agreed with United Nations partners to ensure a practical division of labour and to create synergies", one of the key United Nations coordination results in the strategic plan.				
Key actions	**Time frame**	**Responsible units**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
4.1 Within the Fourth Cooperation Framework, **elaborate specific roles, lines of accountability, and responsibilities** for the delivery of joint results, within the context of the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011, including actions to be taken collectively to ensure more predictable resources for South-South Cooperation.	2008	SU/SSC and the Executive Office, supported by the Partnerships Bureau, BDP, BCPR, and regional bureaux		
4.2 **Define and obtain approval of memoranda of understanding** and/or action plans with United Nations partners.	2008-2011	SU/SSC and the Partnerships Bureau, supported by BDP and BCPR		

*Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre (http://erc.undp.org).